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RETURN WITH US NOW... is the official publication of the Radio Historical Association of Colorado, Inc., a non-profit organization. Cost of membership is \$20.00 for the first year with \$15.00 for annual renewal. Each member has full use of the Club resources. For further information contact anyone listed below.

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THERE WILL BE A BOARD MEETING IN FEBRUARY!

ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME AND INVITED TO ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE AT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING. The February 6th meeting is at home of Dan Decker at 7:30 P.M.

RHAC member Bob Loudon is looking for Bill Stern's football broadcasts. Buy, sell or trade 16" disks of WANT-AD:

Big Band broadcasts. Phone: 503-484-1506.

THE FEBRUARY 1992 MEETING WILL BE FEBRUARY 20TH AT THE CHURCH OF THE MASTER, LOCATED AT 17TH AVENUE AND FILBERT COURT. OUR GUEST SPEAKER WILL BE PETER BOYLES WHO WILL INFORM US IN DETAIL OF HIS VARIED AND COLORFUL EXPERIENCES IN DENVER RADIO!

PETER BOYLES Born in Pitts, PA 1943. Began radio as a writer for AAA Auto Club Traffic Reports. • Went on-air reporter 1973 • KAAT Radio 1974-75 • KLAK w/Bob Lee 1976-78 • KWBZ w/Alan Berg 1979-81 • • KHOW 1983-84 • KOA 1984-86 • KNUS 1986-89 • KBX 1989-90 • KYBG 1990-92•

FEBRUARY 20th MEETING: Special Meeting! Special Menu! Time: 6:00 P.M. FREE Cold cuts & coffee. If you wish soda, bring your own. PLEASE R.S.V.P. - Phone 761-4139 - To tell us how many will attend meeting! After meeting: Donuts and coffee



Redio Historical Association of Colorado shoestring bank roll and dreams.

KING'S ROOST

by Dick and Maletha King

The RHAC's January l6th meeting was most interesting and reminded us that we can do what we want to do, if we have enough intestinal fortitude and faith.

Morey DaVolt, a gentleman that learned radio from the ground up, after years of being an hourly worker in industry, made the plunge with only a

Morey had the moral backing and support of his wife Julia, and between them, built a one-horse station that catered to simple, honest, working people. He feels that approach will work today, and is thinking of doing it again in another market area.

Maybe he's right, maybe simple honest commercials and broadcasting to family folk with basic day-to-day needs would work.

Morey had lots of help from the various people that passed thru the staff of his station, and is most appreciative of the help he received from Glen Owen and the others in the sales staff that kept the money coming in to make KLAK a success, be it small, and to be able to sell it profitably.

Those that missed his presentation, missed a great example of how things can still be done in America.

NEW CATALOG INDEX! We are now offering a new catalog index of the shows offered by our libraries. The ten page listing is available to any member interested, if they will just send the 52 cents postage to RHAC, PO Box 1908, Englewood, Co 80150.

New catalogs are also available for the cost of \$15.00 each and will include the new index.

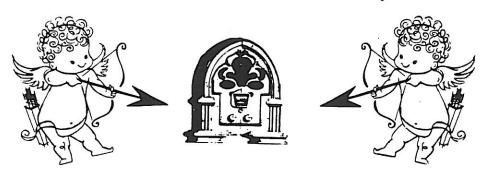
THANKS! The club wishes to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers who put in their time for your pleasure.

FEBRUARY 20th MEMBERS MEETING: Special Meeting! Special Menu!

Special Guest Speaker at 6:30 P.M. Peter Boyles!

6:00 P.M. FREE cold cut lunch & coffee. IF you wish soda, bring your own.

PLEASE R.S.V.P. - Phone 761-4139 to tell us how many will attend!



The Life of Riley

As much family as you can find at a radio show is expressed by the folks on "The Life of Riley."

Rehersals are so pleasant and so easy that not much can be said about them, except that they weekly bring together a group of very nice people who enjoy one another's company.

Bill Bendix and Paula Winslowe have been playing "Chester A. and Peg Riley" since September of 1945, and are now so attached to their two script children, "Babs" and "Junior," as to consider them second offspring. It is quite natural to see Paula straighten Tommy "Junior" Cook's tie before a broadcast, or give a motherly pat to the pretty young cheek of Barbara Eiler ("Babs"). And Bendix, a down-to-earth chap who likes to wear shirt sleeves and suspenders in his own quiet Encino home, is as affectionately regarded by his supporting cast as a "dad" should be.

"The Life of Riley" actually began as a radio series named "The Flotsam Family" and written for Groucho Marx. Brilliant Irving Brecher auditioned his show for an audience and a sponsor who laughed hilariously, but failed to be convinced by Groucho in the fairly straight role of a "family head." When Brecher came to Hollywood, the script was in his suitcase; and not long after, he saw a little movie called "The McGuerins of Brooklyn," starring William Bendix. The second audition, with Bendix as "Chester A.," was given with alteration only of title and character names. The show was placed in a late evening spot on Sunday, won a small audience, and was bought by Procter & Gamble for a large raise in \$\$\$\$ and a new time and network.

Brecher, who owns the show and maintains control of its content, functions in a supervisory capacity. Allen Lipscott, with whom Brecher previously wrote pieces for Mickey Mouse magazine and narration of the old "Easy Aces" short subjects kidding the silent movies, is now chief scripter of "Riley's" faux pas and happinesses. He is assisted by Reuben Shipp, (a young Canadian Brecher hired because he resembled a favorite cousin, and whom Brecher now likes even better than his cousin); and by Dick Powell, not to be confused with June Allyson's husband of the same name.

"The Life of Riley" scripts are always several weeks ahead of schedule, unlike most comedy programs written and rewritten virtually up to the minute of broadcast. Bendix, therefore, seldom has a furrowed brow about material, and merely has to show up for the broadcast and rehearsals.

The one controversial character on the show is that of "Digby O'Dell, the Friendly Undertaker," enacted by John Brown, who also plays "Gillis." The show had been on the air for a few months when Brecher wrote in four lines to be spoken by an undertaker. At the rehearsal, John Brown was asked to read the part for the actor, who was absent. Using the voice he had in mind for an English professor, Brown was so effective that he was kept in character for the broadcast. In four weeks, "Digby O'Dell" was a regular, and his homely little comments: ("When you're flat on your back, I'll give you a lift"; "The grass is always greener on the other fellow," etc.) were being exchanged by his great hoard of fans.

The Merry Mortician's part is always written with extreme care; and although some are touchy about it, the humorous philosophy expounded by "Digger" is popular with more listeners than not, and with almost all undertakers. A typical funeral home writes: "You are a credit to our profession." A typical fan says: "John Brown, as 'Mr. Digger," has done something that no human being has ever done. He has put a sense of humor into the subject of death. Now I ask you, who else could have done that?"

"Riley's" boss is played by Alan Reed, and completing the standard personnel are announcer Ken Niles and musical director Lou Kosloff.

"The Life of Riley" has also been made into a movie, in which Rosemary DeCamp plays "Peg" and John Brown has been retained as "Digger."

So it must be dim memory for Bill Bendix that in the worst of the depression, he had to be a singer-emcee-bouncer in a cabaret to support his wife and baby...by contrast to the \$2500 a week he now makes as a radio star, and his remunerative film contract besides.

And that kind of progress, to contradict Bendix's own alter ego, "Chester A. Riley," is a far from "revoltin' development" to happen to anybody.

Radio and Television Life, February 27, 1949

The Life of Riley

The Life of Riley was first heard on NBC in the summer of 1943. By January 16, 1944, it had become a Sunday Blue Network show for the American Meat Institute.

Chester A. Riley, radio's riveter and resident hardhat, might have been the Archie Bunker of the 1940's. Riley didn't have Bunker's open bigotry, but his expression of disgust, "What a revoltin' development this is," became one of America's favorite sayings. William Bendix was just about perfect as

Riley. Rather a latecomer to the profession, Bendix didn't act at all until he was 30, when the grocery store he was running was closed by the Depression. For three years he worked with the New Jersey Federal Theatre Project. Stock and Broadway followed, with Bendix scoring a stage triumph in William Saroyan's 1939 Theatre Guild play, The Time of Your Life. He began making films in the early 1940's, and through the decade became known as one of the screen's top character actors, turning in solid performances in such films as Lifeboat and Guadalcanal Diary. Riley was probably his best character -- certainly his best-remembered part.

Riley was developed as the typical hard-working Joe, a guy who did his job when he could find one, paid his bills when he had the dough, raised good, lively kids, went to church as often as his wife could drag him, probably bowled Wednesday nights and drank beer before dinner. Riley was easily exasperated, but not easily defeated. And he was most difficult to defeat when fighting for a flimsy cause. Riley's character really came through best on thin ice. A leaking roof, problems at the plant, or the manifestations of his kids' growing pains were enough to send Chester A. Riley into pandemonium. Before he was finished, what had been a minor problem was a Grade-A disaster. Through it all, wife Peg tried to remain level-headed and understanding, but even she sometimes lost her cool before the 30 minutes were up. The kids, Junior and Babs, watched their father's antics with mixed awe -- half fascination and half apprehension. They knew they might be next on Chester A. Riley's list of targets.

Supporting players got a healthy share of the laughs. Gillis, Riley's co-worker and pal, was also the fly in Riley's ointment. He played a part quite like Ozzie Nelson's Thorny, only with more sarcastic cynicism. Uncle Baxter became Riley's permanent house-guest, avoiding paying rent by reminding Riley of the pint of blood he had given him in the past. Digby O'Dell, "the friendly undertaker," had a part similar to that of Peavey, the druggist of The Great Gildersleeve. Digger, as Riley called him, had one walk-on during the show in which Riley unleashed his problems and braced himself for a series of undertaker jokes. Digger's character was developed to the extreme; it became one of the funniest elements of the show. Well-played by John Brown -- and far removed from his roles as Thorny on Ozzie and Harriet, Al on My Friend Irma, and Broadway on The Damon Runyon Theatre --Digger had a cold, clammy voice and was ghoulishly fascinated by death. He ended his brief appearance on each show with the stock farewell: "Cheerio; I'd better be shoveling off." Brown also played neighbor Gillis. Paula Winslowe played Peg for most of the run, and the kids were handled by, among others, Conrad Binyon and Sharon Douglas.

Barbara Eiler replaced Sharon Douglas in January 1947; by 1945 Scotty Beckett was Junior, and later the part was played by Tommy Cook and Bobby Ellis. Hans Conried was the snide Uncle Baxter. Irving Brecher produced and Don Bernard was the show's first director. Writers include Alan Lipscott and Reuben Ship.

In 1945 Riley moved to Saturday-night NBC for Prell; it moved to Fridays in 1948, and changed sponsors -- to Pabst Blue Ribbon -- in 1949. Then it ran until 1951 as a Friday-night NBC show. Like Ozzie and Harriet, The Life of Riley was virtually unscathed by the arrival of television. It made the transition easily, with Bendix carrying on as ever, after the initial shows had featured Jackie Gleason as Riley. Bendix died in 1964.

Tune In Yesterday, John Dunning, 1976

RELAX WITH RADIO SHOWS

Some people are patient travelers. They sit quietly in a meditative state and simply wait to get there. Or they calmly drive mile after mile, never playing games with the odometer and clock, or fiddling with the search buttons on their radios. It's hard to fathom such fortitude when you're from the "are we there yet?" school of travel. Upholstery in the RV wears out quicker under a fidgeter, and maps get folded and unfolded to shreds as the slow journey is tracked every few miles.

There are a few distractions, like the absentminded bee blundering through the window, or the always popular -"Do you hear that noise in the engine?" But They're short-lived, except for the engine noise, which can come and go on an entire trip, until you wonder if it was always there. Snacks are good diversions, but a bag of chips rarely lasts more than ten miles, unless you have a dip. Then if you add in wiping off the seats, console and dashboard, you may be up to fifteen miles. Doughnuts clock in a disappointing 3.2 miles, while apples can last between 5 and 7. Canned soda doesn't really count, as it's too easy to check the odometer between sips. Reading is good if you can focus on the print while in motion, and if you don't have to assist the driver in watching traffic. There's a game called Cow Poker, that can be either an individual or a team sport - Choose a side of the road, and every cow on that side counts as one point, while grey or white mules add a big ten points to your score. The snag is, a cemetary on your side means you have to bury all your cows and start over. Of course, you're allowed to pretend a bee just

flew in the window to keep your opponent from noticing the cemetary. Good entertainment on rural roads, Cow Poke loses something on an interstate in the way of cows, mules and cemetaries. Which brings you back to peeking at the clock and unfolding a limp map.

On our last RV trip, my husband was ready for me, the fidgeting, map folding, search button operator/driving assistant. He came armed with a collection of 24 old radio shows from the twenty years of "Suspense!" Complete with sound effects, music, plots that kept me on the edge of my seat and stars like Gregory Peck, Alan Ladd, James Mason, Agnes Morehead and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., these thirty minute shows on audio cassette made the miles fly by. Once billed as "Radio's outstanding theater of thrills," the "Suspense!" dramas are top notch productions with excellent sound quality. How could I pay attention to the odometer when Lucille Ball was trying to outwit a cold-blooded strangler, and Pat O'Brien, as a cataleptic who had lost his medical alert bracelet and identification, was about to be embalmed if no one noticed his nose twitching?

The golden age of radio had something for everybody, and a surprising number of the old shows, complete with commercials that are really fun to hear, are available (for sale or for rent from R.H.A.C.). For those who remember listening as children, "The Lone Ranger," ("Return with us to those thrilling days of yesteryear..."), "Tarzan," "Captain Midnight," "Superman," and "The Green Hornet," will strike a familiar chord. "The Shadow" ("Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?") first starred Orson Welles as Lamont Cranston and Agnes Morehead as "his friend and constant companion, the lovely Margo Lane." Welles was asked to resign after Mercury Theatre presented "War of the Worlds" (also available on cassette) one Halloween and scared the pants off New Jersey and half the East Coast. Producers of "The Shadow" felt that Welles noteriety had become too much for him to continue playing the mysterious Lamont Cranston, so they replaced him and "The Shadow" and Welles went their seperate ways.

Adult programming offers a cornucopia of entertainment, from westerns to comedy and absorbing one-hour adaptations of movies, now known as classics. "Lux Radio Theater," broadcast from Hollywood, was the most popular, and presented the original stars in their screen roles. Opening night jitters were not uncommon for the Hollywood stars, as they prepared for their first live performance in front of a radio audience. Cecil B. Demille introduced the show each week, and some of the offerings included:

"To Have and Have Not," with Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, "Shane," starring Alan Ladd and Van Heflin, "Great Expectations," with Rock Hudson and Debra Pagett, "For Whom the Bell Tolls," starring Gary Cooper, Ingrid Bergman and Akim Tamaroff, and the light-hearted "It Happened One Night, with Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert. Weekly comedy shows like "Our Miss Brook," featured Eve Arden and Gale Gordon, "Ozzie and Harriet," complete with the Nelson family and "The Jack Benny Show," are guaranteed to produce some chuckles, while "Lights Out" and "The Inner Sanctum" promise some chills and thrills. In the adult Western category, "The Six Shooter," a series starring James Stewart with his distinctive voice, is about an easy-going cowboy who righted wrongs in the old West, while "Gunsmoke" gave the radio audience more serious drama. Starring William Conrad (who's still going strong today on the television series, "Jake and the Fatman") as Matt Dillon, the dedicated marshall of Dodge City, the radio version of "Gunsmoke" has the reputation for being the finest weekly production ever aired. Everything, from the acting, writing, sound effects and music, was done to the highest standards. It's a fact that, in many of the old radio shows, quality of production was the number-one concern. They were an art form during the golden age, and a highly entertaining one, at that.

Having a collection of radio shows can come in handy on lots of occasions. Rainy days are a perfect time to curl up with Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson (Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce made a series for radio following their box-office success) while lazy nights lend themselves to a good bedtime story of your choice. Invite some neighbors over after dinner for a radio show, and chances are, they'll go back home with a borrowed cassette in hand. And the next time you want to get from point A to point B with a minimum of fidgeting, slip a radio show in the cassette player, put your imagination in gear, and let the words, music and sound effects work their magic.







RHAC TAPE LIBRARY

TA		HAC 5TH ANNUAL CONVENTION (C) 1800'
1L	6-15-91	JACK BENNY REVISITED w/ John & Larry Gassman
2L	6-15-91	ADVERTISERS PANEL w/ John Rayburn
IR	6-15-91	PANEL I w/ Shirley Mitchell, Jeanne Bates, Clint Comerford, Ray Erlenborn, Meridy Erlenborn
2R	6-15-91	PANEL II w/ Harry Elders, Sam Edwards, Les Tremayne, Beverly Edwards, Joan Tremayne, Ezra Stone
TAF	E 979 RI	HAC 5TH ANNUAL CONVENTION (C) 1200'
1L		FIRST NIGHTER RECREATION "A King In Washington"
2L	6-15-91	ALDRICH FAMILY RECREATION "Homer's Engagement"
1R	6-15-91	ELIZABETH MITCHELL, M.D. THE BICKERSONS RECREATION
	7-6-48	NEW ADVENTURES OF THE THIN MAN "Adventure Of The Passionate Palooka"
2R	6-15-91	TAPE MACHINE CARE w/ Michael Daut of Second Sound
TAP	E 980 TH	E LIFE OF RILEY (C) 1200'
1L	9-13-47	Babs' Date With Riley's Boss' Nephew
	9-20-47	Junior Runs Away
2L	9-27-47 10-4-47	Statue For The Piano Riley Is Getting Old
1R	10-11-47	Riley The Cop - Flashback
	10-18-47	Community Chest Drive
2R	10-25-47	Ragamuffin Ball
	11-1-47	Football Pool Card
TAPI	E 981 TH	E LIFE OF RILEY (C) 1200'
1L	11-8-47	Junior And Babs Put On Anniversary Party
	11-15-47	Riley In School Play - Flashback
2L	11-22-47	Buick Contest
	11-29-47	Thanksgiving With The Gillises
1R	12-6-47	The Greatest Man I Know
	12-13-47	Babs Is Blackballed At The Sorority
2R	12-20-47	First Christmas In Store Window - Flashback
	12-27-47	Family Christmas Present - TV Set Of Piano

RHAC TAPE LIBRARY

		LIFE OF RILEY (C)	1200
ΙL	1-3-48 1-10-48	Riley Gets Junior Two Dates For A Dance Women's Rights - Wedding Ring	
2L	1-17-48 1-24-48	Walking Man - Guest: Ralph Edwards Babs Quits School	
1R	1-31-48 2-7-48	Uncle Baxter Returns - Scholarship Father And Son Banquet	
1R	2-14-48 2-21-48	Comic Valentine Riley Lies About Wrestling Match	
TAP	E 983 THE	LIFE OF RILEY (C)	1200'
1L	2-28-48 3-6-48	Bab's Sweet Sixteen Birthday Party Riley Punches His Foreman	
2L	3-13-48 3-20-48	Monkey Story - Flashback Suggestion Contest	
1R	3-27-48 4-3-48	Easter Bunny - Fertilizer Juvenile Delinquency	
2R	4-10-48 4-17-48	Peg Studies French C.A.R.E.	
TAPI		LIFE OF RILEY (C)	1200'
1L	5-1-48 5-15-48	Baseball Uniform - Reform School Man Of Distinction	
2L	5-22-48 5-29-48	Monahan Spends The Weekend With The Rileys Cooperation Picnic	
1R	6-12-48 6-19-48	Babs' Graduation Father's Day - Bathrobes	
2R	6-26-48 10-8-48	Vacation - Prison Farm How To Pick A Mate	
TAPE	E 985 THE	LIFE OF RILEY (C)	1200'
1L	12-3-48 12-10-48	Football Tickets Riley's Jilted Sister	
2L	10-6-50	Be Kind To Simon Surprise Party Show	
1R	10-13-50 10-20-50	Riley's First Car - Traffic Court Collection Agency	
2R	10-27-50 11-3-50	Riley Wins A New Stove Babs' Elopement	



RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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			Signature

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PETER BOYLES
WILL BE OUR
GUEST SPEAKER THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH, 6:00 PM AT THE CHURCH OF THE MASTER 17TH AVE AND FILBERT COURT

SPECIAL MEETING - SEE DETAILS INSIDE!!!

